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COMMENT: No Backsliding, but Cautious on Next Steps  
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19. (C) While the GoB fully supported ASEAN's strong statement on Burma in September (ref B), the way forward remains unclear to the GoB as it perceives that even the Chinese do not appear to have the kind of leverage needed to force rapid change. Clearly, some of the GoB hesitancy to press harder and faster for change in Burma is the result of an assessment that opening the ASEAN door for intervention in members' domestic affairs could turn an unwelcome eye on Brunei's own less-than-democratic practices. We expect Brunei to quietly urge consensus around moderation and dialogue with the Burmese aimed at keeping the regime engaged and on a slow path toward reducing human rights violations over time, but not/not forcing the military out of power any time soon.  
SKODON